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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine pertinent research concerned with teaching English as a second language (ESL) to speakers of Spanish, to analyze fundamental problems Spanish speakers may experience when taught to read and learn in the target language English, and to suggest practices for teachers of ESL to assist Spanish-English bilingual readers in their specific linguistic needs. Following a brief review of the literature on the teaching of English as a second language, fundamental language differences are discussed, and phonological aspects of consonants and vowels as Spanish speakers reading English words may pronounce and interpret them are examined. A lesson for the native speaker of Spanish is suggested in a step-by-step presentation. (LL)

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MONOLINGUALS TEACHING BILINGUALS:

READING IN ESL FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS

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MONOLINGUALS TEACHING BILINGUALS:

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This paper is based on available research and on the writer's four-year experience in teaching second languages to native speakers of Spanish in South America.

The purpose of this paper is to (1) examine pertinent research concerned with teaching English as a second language (ESL) to non-English speakers, (2) analyze fundamental problems Spanish speakers may experience when taught to read and learn in the target language English and (3) suggest practices for teachers of ESL to assist Spanish-English bilingual readers in their specific linguistic needs.

Relevant Research

Österberg's (12) research showed that Swedish children who had learned to read in their local dialect first, performed superior afterwards in learning to read in the standard Swedish language. Modiano (11) in her study with Indian children in Mexico concluded that these children have shown superior results in learning Spanish as a second language when taught first to read in their own Indian language. Wassermann and Wassermann (16) stated that helping Mexican-American children to retain their own language while acquiring English as a second language, turns a language disadvantage into a language advantage. Loban (10) espoused that competence in learning to read depends upon a child's competence in the spoken language and Bloomfield and Barnhart (2), Fries (7) and Lefevre (9) emphasized that well developed oral language is a prerequisite to learning to read successfully. Cornejo (3) observed when native speakers of Spanish are just exposed to learn oral English that this is not likely to be satisfactory.

Since each language has its own system and no two systems are the same, unilingual teachers of English should be aware of similarities and differences in the two languages. While the great majority of Spanish sounds are capable of approximate renderings in English sounds, the trillings sounds of the Spanish R and RR resemble only vaguely its equivalents in the English sounds of r and rr. Likewise, the renderings of N (EH-n͡yeh) in the Spanish word mañana y niño and of LL (EH-l͡yeh) in llamar y llegar are strikingly different. In contrast, the Spanish

words FATAL, UNIVERSAL, ORIGINAL, NOTABLE, IMPROBABLE have their exact counterparts in the English writing system as well as approximate renderings in the English sound system. However, as Elkonin (5) stressed perception and discrimination of printed characters is only the external side of the reading process behind which lie the more central processes concerned with the behaviour of creating the sound form of the word and connected with it, its comprehension. Taschow (14) in a comparative study in the German and English language showed that conceptual and reasoning processes tend to create problems when the native learner is subjected to read in the English language. It may result in a source of confusion as Downing (4) explained in the Cognitive Clarity Theory. Vernon (15) also concluded that cognitive confusion is the basic characteristic of reading disability because conceptual and reasoning processes of children are overlooked.

Observations from the Puerto Rican Study (17) in which reading achievements in the target language fell behind their oral progress in learning English opens up specific questions. What are some of the demanding reading needs that Spanish speakers must learn? What are special reading deficiencies that complicate learning to read in English? How different is the mother tongue in phonology, morphology and syntax from the English language system? What are some of the interference points between the learner's stronger language Spanish and the weaker language English? What suggestions can be furnished for the classroom teacher who teaches reading in ESL?

Fundamental Language Differences

To seek answers to some of these questions, the following discussion examines phonological aspects of consonants and vowels as Spanish speakers reading English words may pronounce and interpret them (1).

A. Consonants

Phonology

Spanish speakers may pronounce: English sounds	Position in word	Pronounced as	Spanish speakers may interpret: English words as
th	B* + M*	s-d-t-dd	thin = sin, din, tin father = fodder, birthday = birsday
w	B	gw	was = gwas
m	M + E*	n	somtime = sontine scream = screan (screen)
ch	B + E	sh	cheap = sheap (sheep) march = marsh
st	B	est	stop = estop spot = espot
t	E	omitted	went = wen (when) want = wan (one)
l or ll	M + E	omitted	help = hep toll = toe, Paul = Pau
e	B	omitted	every = very
s	E	omitted	has = ha, goose = goo
y	B	j	yellow = jello, yes = jes
v	B	b	vanish = banish
d	E	t or w	feed = feet, read = row
ck	E	omitted	kick = ki
r	M	flapped or trilled	very = verrry
g	E	omitted	sing = sin, big = bi
h	B	omitted or fff	have = af, faf

B= beginning M= middle E*=ending

B. Vowels

Spanish speakers may pronounce: Vowel sounds in pronunciation not distinguished	Spanish speakers may interpret: English words as
ea (long) + i (short)	beat equal to bit
ai (long) + e (short)	bait equal to bet
u-e (long) + oo (short)	Luke equal to look
oa (long) + ough (long)	boat equal to bought
a pronounced as ä	cat equal to cät

The Spanish reader therefore may read the English sentence "This cat was very big" in approximately this way "di (s) cät gwas berrry bi" and "Mother and father went to help Paul" may be rendered as "Modder ant fodder wen to (f)ep Pau."

Morphology: Examining morphological aspects (1), English nouns in plural may have no distinctive forms since the English -s ending may disappear. Instead of possessive morphemes as in Bob's hat, the prepositional phrase hat of Bob may be used. If, however, the possessive morpheme is used, two nouns are heard Bob hat deleting the s - sound. Pronouncing verb forms, the third person singular will be identical with the simple verb forms because of s-sound deletion. Thus, sleeps becomes sleep and walks becomes walk. Past tenses are read as present tenses: came as come, said as say, had as has, and walked as walk. Past tenses may also be confused with past participles as in he took becomes he has took. When adjectives are compared as colder and coldest, they become more cold and most cold.

Syntax: Examining syntactical aspects (1), adjective forms are used in the adverbial position as in: He writes real good. Subject pronouns may be omitted in English since they are most often omitted in Spanish:

Hablamos español is equal to speak Spanish in place of WE speak Spanish and no puedo escribir en inglés equals cannot write in English in place of I cannot write in English. In the Spanish sentence Le dije que no pude venir the object pronoun Le comes immediately before the verb, while in English it follows the verb as in I told her that I could not come. However, its syntactical position in Spanish and English is the same when the object pronoun is used with the infinitive, the present participle and in commands: No quería gastarlo equals I did not want to spent it (infinitive position), están haciéndola ahora equals they are doing it (present participle position) and hagámoslo equals let us do it (command position). The pronoun may also be used to repeat subject or object within the English sentence as in Mother and daughter, they are shopping and They bought it, the table. The English verb have in I have a book expresses ownership of the book and may be replaced by I got a book. The English verb do is replaced by the verb make since the Spanish verb hacer stands for do and make. Sometimes the deletion of the English verb are is noted as in Wich one you boys in?" as compared to Wich one are you boys in?

Examining the place of function words to express grammatical relationships and to show grammatical meaning of an utterance, Spanish students may read: He classes in place of His classes. I can to speak in place of I can speak, and I don't go to school Saturday in place of I don't go to school on Saturday.

Examining basic sentences,in the English Noun-Verb-Adjective arrangement the Spanish reader may replace the adjective with a noun thus producing a Noun-Verb-Noun pattern: The child is hungry becomes The child has hunger. In the Noun-Verb-Noun pattern as in Maria is a secretary,

the Spanish reader may read Maria is secretary thus omitting the article a after the verb be. In the English Noun-Verb-Noun-Noun pattern (N_1-V-N_2 N_3), in which N_2 is the indirect object and N_3 the direct object of the verb, the position of N_2 and N_3 may be inverted by the Spanish speaker even though it is not possible in English.

	N_1	V	N_2	N_3
English:	Mother	asked	Susan	a question
	N_1	V	N_3	N_2
Spanish:	Mother	asked	a question	to Susan
or	N_1	V	N_2	N_3
	Mother	asked	to Susan	a question

Suggested ESL Teaching Approaches

To assist ESL teachers in not only coping with but overcoming and preventing some or all of the above analyzed and summarized shortcomings of Spanish speakers in learning English, various ESL methodologies are available (13). Among those Fries (6) Oral Approach emphasizes thoroughness in developing listening and speaking in the target language English which leads then to reading and writing it. Materials are to be mastered in teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil dialogues, read, written and translated; thus, listening and speaking go hand in hand with reading and writing the target language without disregarding the mother tongue. Knowing and understanding the problems of the native speakers lead to adapting the reading-learning materials to specific linguistic needs.

As shown in the San Antonio Language Project (8), directed dialogues are first orally presented, each pattern repeated so that Spanish speakers learn English symbols that fit the situation by learning symbols in a situation and not from a word list or through translation.

The oral model in context precedes the written symbolization which the native speaker will read, translate into the mother tongue, reproduce again in English and then answer questions. Independent proficiency is paramount for every activity. The dialogue then is followed up with simple multiple substitutions, singular-plural correlates, minimal pairs and sentence reductions (16).

An ESL Lesson Model

Thus a lesson for the native speakers of Spanish is suggested below in a step by step presentation.

The basic dialogue presented by the ESL teacher is:

"What have you in your hand?"
"I have a ball."

ESL Teacher:	Native Speakers of Spanish:
1. presents dialogue orally	2. listen to English sounds
3. repeats dialogue	4. listen again for clearer sound discrimination
5. says first line says second line	6. repeats orally first line repeats orally second line
7. writes dialogue on chalkboard	8. sees written symbolization in context
9. reads dialogue from chalkboard	10. reads after teacher
11. guides to similar language patterns of basic dialogue (shows book)	12. "What have you in your hand?" "I have a book"
13. Questions: teacher-pupil interaction	14. Answer

Spanish speakers demonstrate mastery of English by pupil-pupil dialogues, selecting answers and saying them with the normal speed of speech, followed by

writing and reading them. Then, basic learning is followed-up with extended learning experiences in oral and written English by

1. Simple Substitution: "I have a ball" in which ball is substituted with book, hat, dog, etc.
2. Multiple Substitution: "I have a ball" in which "I" is substituted with we, you, they and ball with book, hat, etc.
3. Singular-Plural Verb Correlates:

   The book is big. - The books are big.

   The hat is blue. - The hats are blue.

   The boy reads English. - The boys read English.
4. Minimal Pairs: has-hat; hand-sand; ball-call; book-look;
5. Sentence Reduction:

   The boy has a book and a ball. = He has them.

   The girl has a book and a ball. = She has them.

Step by step contextual teaching and learning through a basic dialogue and follow-up exercises can assist Spanish speakers to internalize the target language in co-existence with their mother tongue.

Entendido

The domain of this paper's discourse was limited to a significant segment of fundamental problems native speakers of Spanish may encounter in learning to read and think in the English language. Specific problems that may arise were discussed from the phonological, morphological and syntactial point of view. These and other problems should challenge reading researchers and teachers of ESL to study further in order to gain greater knowledge in assisting Spanish

bilinguals to internalize the English language. In this hope lies the fulfillment to learn and read proficiently in the English language for the purpose to exchange meanings as a means of communication, the sole purpose of any language learning.

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